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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 001142

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [BL](#)  
SUBJECT: MORALES SEEKS OBAMA MEETING AT UNGA

REF: SECSTATE 79509

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires James Creagan for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca told CDA James Creagan August 4 that President Evo Morales seeks a "significant meeting" with President Obama on September 23 as part of the UN General Assembly gathering. Choquehuanca accepted the USG counterproposal on a bilateral framework agreement and said the document could serve as a foundation for the meeting between Morales and Obama. End summary.

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National Day Message Sparks Request  
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¶2. (C) Charge d'Affaires Creagan began the meeting by delivering to Foreign Minister Choquehuanca a letter from President Obama congratulating President Morales on the celebration of Bolivia's national day and affirming his desire to strengthen the bilateral relationship (reftel). Choquehuanca took time to read the entire letter, then nodded his head and said, "This is very good."

¶3. (C) CDA Creagan then gave the Foreign Minister the USG counterproposal on the GOB's proposed bilateral framework agreement, which Choquehuanca accepted gratefully. Charge explained that it was likely that the U.S. Congress' August recess could delay the nomination of Arturo Valenzuela, which would in turn postpone the second round of bilateral discussions into September. Choquehuanca accepted the news sanguinely, pointing out that "August will go quickly."

¶4. (C) After a pause, Choquehuanca gestured to the letter from President Obama and said, "The President would like to meet directly with President Obama -- not a short meeting, a significant meeting. After meeting him in Trinidad and Tobago, he wants to talk about important issues for perhaps an hour at minimum." Choquehuanca said that while other dates could be possible, President Morales would prefer to meet on September 23 as part of the UN General Assembly.

¶5. (C) Choquehuanca noted that there would be a summit on climate change issues on September 22 and major speeches on September 24, but evinced his hope that a meeting could take

place on the 23rd. (Choquehuanca also said Morales would play a soccer game in New York City on the 23rd, but did not say with whom.) Charge told Choquehuanca he would convey this message, but cautioned that there were likely already many meetings set for that date. Choquehuanca agreed but stressed President Morales' desire to hold the meeting. Referring to the framework agreement counterproposal, he said the meeting would be substantive and would touch on the same themes, quickly ticking off bilateral cooperation, counternarcotics, poverty alleviation, and trade. "How can we make an alliance between an indigenous president and an African-American president?" Choquehuanca asked rhetorically.

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Comment  
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16. (C) Embassy is aware that arranging a meeting at the UNGA between Presidents Obama and Morales may be difficult, but notes that a potentially difficult counternarcotics certification decision is pending September 15, as well as an announcement that former President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada may not be extradited to Bolivia. Either or both of these could be interpreted negatively by the GOB and scuttle bilateral talks. On the other hand, the prospect of a face-to-face meeting with President Obama could dovetail well with the discussions and provide the talks a much-needed boost. End comment.  
CREAGAN